

# Ezekiel 11-13 • "They shall go into captivity"

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Okay, open your Bibles please, we're continuing on in our study of Ezekiel. We're in the 11th chapter, so join me there please in Ezekiel chapter 11. The Lord is continuing to speak to Ezekiel regarding the sin of the house of Israel and I will remind you that Ezekiel is giving these prophecies before the city of Jerusalem was invaded for the last time and destroyed along with the temple. And so Ezekiel is already living in the Babylonian empire because he was taken captive by one of the earlier invasions. He, along with many other people, including Daniel. Daniel was there at the same time, so Ezekiel and Daniel are contemporaries.

Now at the same time when God is giving visions to Daniel and doing miracles through him, giving visions and prophecies to Ezekiel, He's speaking through Jeremiah at the same time back in Jerusalem. Jeremiah speaking there, Ezekiel speaking here and the word of the Lord is going out.

There is absolutely no excuse for the people. God is literally bending over backwards to communicate what is coming and He continues to call them to repent. But He is showing Ezekiel the reasons, He's showing Ezekiel what He sees and that's where we're going to see in these chapters. We've already seen some of it.

We've seen Ezekiel literally taken in the spirit to Jerusalem, taken to the temple where he sees and hears things which he wouldn't be able to see and hear without the Lord. But that reminds us of the fact that God sees and hears everything all the time and all the horrific details that we would rather not think about.

I've told you guys before, years ago, I used to kind of tell everybody I was a news hound and I spent time looking through the news online and I came to a place in my life where I couldn't do it anymore. I realized it was impacting me emotionally and spiritually and it was just stirring me up in ways that just, frankly wasn't good.

So I stopped doing it to that degree and now I just kind of, once in a while, sample headlines. But I just couldn't deal, I couldn't deal with it. My heart couldn't deal with it. I needed to keep my heart in the word and I don't mind calling myself weak. "I am weak and I need to be strong in Him."

But I realized, that's not the way I was going to be strong by hanging out in the headlines. You ever stop to think about the fact that God doesn't get a break from the headlines, from the horrific details? Sees things that we don't see, hears every word, every action, knows the heart of man, if that isn't scary enough. And so the Lord is going to continue to show Ezekiel things that he couldn't know, wouldn't know, without the Lord revealing them.

Chapter 11 begins by saying, *"The Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the east gate of the house of the Lord, which faces east. And behold, at the entrance of the gateway there were twenty-five men. And I saw among them Jaazaniah the son of Azzur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people."* (ESV) And when it says "princes" it means family leaders. These are noblemen, these are people who have the pull; they're movers and shakers and the kind of individuals the people would look up to.

*"And he said to me, (verse 2) Son of man, these are the men who devise iniquity and who give wicked counsel in this city; <sup>3</sup> who say, 'The time is not near to build houses. This city is the cauldron, and we are the meat.'"* All right, I want you to stop there for just a moment. Let me explain this, because these men that Ezekiel is being shown in this vision are saying 2 things and it's important that we understand each of the things that they're saying. First, they're saying, *"the time is not near to build houses."*

And if you didn't go through the book of Jeremiah, you'd probably scratch your head and go, "I don't know what that means." But actually in the Book of Jeremiah, he was speaking to the people, not only to..., because Jeremiah was prophesying to the people there in Judea, but his prophecies were also being sent to the Persian kingdom. And he was telling the people, "this is going to be a long haul, so settle in, build houses, marry and so forth."

Let me show you it, I'll put it on the screen here for you. It's from the Book of Jeremiah chapter 29, verses 4 and 5. It says,

**Jeremiah 29:4-5 (ESV)**

*"Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce."*

And so God is basically telling..., we went through this in the Book of Jeremiah. God is telling the people who are in exile and this is a message for the people who are going to go into exile as well. “Just get used to it because this is the hand of the Lord and if you go there and just decide you're going to live your life, you're going to be submitting to the disciplinary action of the Lord, so just get used to it. Be prepared that you're going to have to build a house in the Persian Kingdom.”

So you see the men of Jerusalem were contradicting the Lord's message, they were directly contradicting it. And they were saying, “now is not the time to start building houses in Persia because this is our land and then nobody's going to take us away from it.”

Next, you'll notice that they were saying, *“this city is the cauldron, and we are the meat.”* And this was obviously some kind of a saying that was fairly popular at the time and I believe that what they're saying here, as we're going to see this in the verses to come, they're essentially saying that, “Jerusalem is the cauldron, this city is the cauldron and we're safe in the cauldron, the meat is safe. We're protected from the enemy, we don't need to worry about the enemy.” And they were saying “peace and safety” when there wasn't peace and safety.

So God is going to address that as well, look at verse 4 and following, He says, *““4 Therefore prophesy against them; prophesy, O son of man.” 5 And the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and he said to me, “Say, Thus says the Lord: So you think, O house of Israel. For I know the things that come into your mind. 6 You have multiplied your slain in this city and have filled its streets with the slain.”*

So the first thing God does is He confronts them on the people who've been murdered. *“Therefore (verse 7) thus says the Lord God: Your slain whom you have laid in the midst of it, they are the meat, (in other words, they are the protected) and this city is the cauldron, but you shall be brought out of the midst of it.”* You see, they thought Jerusalem was this impenetrable defense, why? Because the temple was there, they believed there's no way an enemy could get into Jerusalem, there was just no way. Why? Because God's presence was there in the temple.

But God has been telling them, “no, I'm going to let the enemy come in and do this.” And this is one of those verses where He says, “you're not the protected and yeah, though this city may be a cauldron, you will actually be led out of it or brought out of the midst of it.” In other words, “you will be exposed.”

And look what He says in verse 8, this is a very direct statement. *“<sup>8</sup> You have feared the sword, and I will bring the sword upon you, declares the Lord God. <sup>9</sup> And I will bring you out of the midst of it, (meaning the city) and give you into the hands of foreigners, and execute judgments upon you. <sup>10</sup> You shall fall by the sword. I will judge you at the border of Israel, and you shall know that I am the Lord.*

*<sup>11</sup> This city shall not be your cauldron, nor shall you be the meat in the midst of it. I will judge you at the border of Israel, <sup>12</sup> and you shall know that I am the Lord. For you have not walked in my statutes, nor obeyed my rules, but have acted according to the rules of the nations that are around you.”* And this is one of the primary issues that God had with His people. He says, “you've thrown off the guidelines and regulations that I've given you through the law and you've taken up the ways of the nations around you.”

And of course we know that those were pagan nations and that He's basically telling them, “you've adopted paganism, you've brought paganism into the inner part of the temple, that place where you were to worship me, you've brought paganism in there.” And we look at this and we think, “wow, these people deserve judgment.” It's pretty easy, isn't it? I mean, it seems like an open and shut case to me, “those people deserve judgment, okay, let them have it God.”

There's only one problem, we do the same thing. We Christians and the church as a whole, we do the same thing. We've let the world in, we've let the world into our hearts individually, we've been influenced by the world and we've let the world into the church. There is so much worldliness in the church in just the way we do things, how we make decisions, and it hasn't gone well for us.

And if we're going to start kind of banging the gavel on the desk saying, “guilty,” then we're going to have to point the finger back at ourselves, even our own hearts. It's incredible, we don't even realize it. It's incredible how many decisions we make in a given day, not based on the Word, but on the world. We've learned how the world lives, we've learned how the world acts and we've learned to mimic the world.

We're kind of an incredible people to be honest with you. God loves us, “thank you Lord and thank you that the blood of Jesus Christ keeps on cleansing us from our sin and that sort of thing.” And I truly praise the Lord for that. But when we look at verses like this, the Old Testament is an example to us.

And we need to look at the word of God related to this and we need to say, “what is it, what is it that I need to learn from this myself?” And that is that God

takes a very keen interest when His people begin to act like the world and we're not to do that. In fact, we're told, and this is actually a scripture I shared with the assembled campers up at cascade this last weekend. I shared that beautiful passage from Romans chapter 12, verses 1 and 2, where Paul says, "to be not conformed to the pattern of this world, but instead to be transformed by the renewing of our minds." And that renewal comes through the word of God and allowing the Holy Spirit to imprint and impact that word in our hearts and lives as we walk it out day by day.

But you see that's the whole thing, Paul is just saying in a New Testament vein and in a positive way, what God is condemning the nation of Israel related to the way they were living in an Old Testament vein. He says, "you've lived and you've acted according to the nations," and He could say the same thing about us and He could say the same thing about the church. "You have lived and acted according to the nations, follow me, follow my Word, be transformed, don't allow yourself to be imprinted by the world, rather be transformed."

So verse 13 goes on, *"And it came to pass, while I was prophesying, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then I fell down on my face and cried out with a loud voice and said, 'Ah, Lord God! Will you make a full end of the remnant of Israel?'"* It's almost like Ezekiel is seeing the reality of this judgment beginning to take place. Because remember, this is all just being prophesied at this point. Yes, he's living in a foreign country and so there's the reality of that, but beginning to see people now die and they haven't even been invaded yet by..., for the last time.

And yet, he is really impacted by this and he cries out to the Lord, you can tell where Ezekiel's heart is at. Verse 14, *"And the word of the Lord came to me: <sup>15</sup> 'Son of man, your brothers, even your brothers, your kinsmen, (that means your relatives) the whole house of Israel, all of them, are those of whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, 'Go far from the Lord; to us this land is given for a possession.''"* And this is an interesting statement too, I need to explain it. God is saying, "do you know what they're saying about you guys who have been taken already into captivity? They're saying, fine, go, go far away from the Lord but here, this land is ours, this has been given to us as an eternal possession. So you guys, whatever, you're already there, you're lost to us."

But to them, they're saying, "the inhabitants of the city, this is our possession and there's nothing anybody can do about it." And of course we know how wrong they are. But I want you to notice that God is going to go on and speak to Ezekiel a word of wonderful encouragement about those people who have already been taken captive, already been taken into exile.

Look what He says in verse 16, *“Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord God: Though I removed them far off among the nations, and though I scattered them among the countries, (look at what He says here) yet I have been a sanctuary to them for a while in the countries where they have gone.’”*

Do you know what's interesting people? And I don't want to belabor this, but the Jews are just one nation of people among many nations of people who have been uprooted and taken away from their homeland and sent off. But people, they are the only nation on the face of the earth to maintain their cultural distinctiveness and then to be brought back to that nation.

And you look at Israel, you look at the history of Israel, you go, “how in the world, how in the...” How many nations have been conquered and just assimilated into those nations that conquered them? How many, oh, good grief, we couldn't even begin to name them all.

But the Jews, conquered, yes, flung far and wide into the nations but they maintained their cultural distinctiveness, why? God says it right here, He explains it right here in verse 16, *“I have been a sanctuary to them.”* God is telling you right here, “I did this, I kept them, I kept them, I preserved them, I've been a sanctuary.”

*“<sup>17</sup> Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord God: I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.’ <sup>18</sup> And when they come there, they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations.”* God is basically telling them, “these people that are going to be scattered, the ones that are already scattered, and the ones who are going to be scattered, when the Babylonians do that final invasion, they're the ones I'm going to bring back. The ones who resist me are going to die, they will die, but the ones who are scattered, I will bring back.”

And when they come back, they will have lived for 70 years in the Persian kingdom and they will have had paganism crammed down their throats that entire time. And they're going to be so sick to death of it, they're going to come back to the land and they're going to rid the land of every pagan idol.

And do you know that when Israel came back from their exile, paganism was no longer an issue, God cured them. It was a pretty drastic cure, I would say, wouldn't you? But they were cured. Paganism did not hamper them from that point on and that's what God is saying here.

Verse 19 says, *“And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,”*<sup>20</sup> *that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.”*<sup>21</sup> *But as for those whose heart goes after their detestable things and their abominations, I will bring their deeds upon their own heads, declares the Lord God.”*

And then the last few verses of the chapter are just kind of Ezekiel describing what he's seeing in this vision as it begins to lift, as the Lord brings him to the end of it. He says, *“*<sup>22</sup> *Then the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel was over them.*<sup>23</sup> *And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain that is on the east side of the city.*<sup>24</sup> *And the Spirit lifted me up and brought me in the vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to the exiles. Then the vision that I had seen went up from me.*<sup>25</sup> *And I told the exiles all the things that the Lord had shown me.”*

So in other words, what Ezekiel, he's just saying, “and then the vision was over and God brought me home and then I told him everything I saw, explained it all to them.”

Chapter 12, *“The word of the Lord came to me: (Ezekiel writes)”*<sup>2</sup> *“Son of man, you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, who have eyes to see, but see not, who have ears to hear, but hear not, for they are a rebellious house.”*<sup>3</sup> *As for you, son of man, prepare for yourself an exile's baggage, and go into exile by day in their sight. You shall go like an exile from your place to another place in their sight. Perhaps they will understand, though they are a rebellious house.”*

So once again, Ezekiel is told to act. I hope Ezekiel was a good actor because he's kind of done, God gives him a lot of kind of dramatic scenes to act out and this is another one. And so he has to act this out in front of the people. So he's not just prophesying verbally, he's prophesying with word pictures through his actions. And so, he's told here what to do.

He says in verse four, *“You shall bring out your baggage by day in their sight, as baggage for exile, and you shall go out yourself at evening in their sight, as those do who must go into exile.”*<sup>5</sup> *In their sight dig through the wall, and bring your baggage out through it.*<sup>6</sup> *In their sight you shall lift the baggage upon your shoulder and carry it out at dusk. You shall cover your face that you may not see the land, for I have made you a sign for the house of Israel.*

*<sup>7</sup> And I did as I was commanded. I brought out my baggage by day, as baggage for exile, and in the evening I dug through the wall with my own hands. I brought out my baggage at dusk, carrying it on my shoulder in their sight. <sup>8</sup> In the morning the word of the Lord came to me: <sup>9</sup> “Son of man, has not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said to you, ‘What are you doing?’ <sup>10</sup> Say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God: This oracle concerns the prince in Jerusalem and all the house of Israel who are in it.’”*

And so he's basically acting out what's going to happen. Because you see when the Babylonians come and make that final invasion and the king realizes, when king Zedekiah realizes there's no stopping this now, they've broken through the wall. He is going to actually cut his own way through the wall and he's going to try to escape and he's going to get a little ways down the road, but then Nebuchadnezzar is going to catch him. And he's going to do horrible things. He's going to slaughter his sons and nobles in front of his eyes and then Nebuchadnezzar's going to have the king's eyes put out.

And so Ezekiel is telling the story with his actions and this is what's going to happen and He tells him, “you are a sign, when the people ask you, *what are you doing?* Just say, *‘Thus says the Lord God: This oracle concerns the prince in Jerusalem.’”*

So verse 11 goes on. He says, “Say, *‘I am a sign for you: as I have done, so shall it be done to them. They shall go into exile, into captivity.’* <sup>12</sup> *And the prince who is among them shall lift his baggage upon his shoulder at dusk, and shall go out. They shall dig through the wall to bring him out through it. He shall cover his face, that he may not see the land with his eyes. <sup>13</sup> And I will spread my net over him, and he shall be taken in my snare. And I will bring him to Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans, yet he shall not see it, ...”* Look at that, that's a prophecy that his eyes are going to be put out. He's going to be brought to Babylon, but he won't be able to see it.

And then He says, “<sup>13</sup> ...and he shall die there. <sup>14</sup> *And I will scatter toward every wind all who are around him, his helpers and all his troops, and I will unsheathe the sword after them. <sup>15</sup> And they shall know that I am the Lord, when I disperse them among the nations and scatter them among the countries. <sup>16</sup> But I will let a few of them escape from the sword, from famine and pestilence, that they may declare all their abominations among the nations where they go, and may know that I am the Lord.*

*<sup>17</sup> And the word of the Lord came to me: <sup>18</sup> “Son of man, eat your bread with quaking, and drink water with trembling and with anxiety. <sup>19</sup> And say to the*



*people of the land, Thus says the Lord God concerning the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the land of Israel: They shall eat their bread with anxiety, and drink water in dismay. In this way her land will be stripped of all it contains, on account of the violence of all those who dwell in it.””*

So once again, Ezekiel had to act out what's going to be happening in the city of Jerusalem. <sup>20</sup> *And the inhabited cities shall be laid waste, and the land shall become a desolation; and you shall know that I am the Lord.* <sup>21</sup> *And the word of the Lord came to me:* <sup>22</sup> *“Son of man, what is this proverb that you have about the land of Israel, saying, ‘The days grow long, and every vision comes to nothing’?*

<sup>23</sup> *Tell them therefore, ‘Thus says the Lord God: I will put an end to this proverb, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel.’ But say to them, The days are near, and the fulfillment of every vision.* <sup>24</sup> *For there shall be no more any false vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel.* <sup>25</sup> *For I am the Lord; I will speak the word that I will speak, and it will be performed. It will no longer be delayed, but in your days, O rebellious house, I will speak the word and perform it, declares the Lord God.””*

So God is basically saying, “no more of this complaining that these visions are being given but it hasn't come,” because Jeremiah was giving visions, Ezekiel was giving visions, but the people were saying, “none of it comes to pass.” God finally says, “it's going to come to pass, every single bit of it that I have declared.”

<sup>26</sup> *And the word of the Lord came to me:* <sup>27</sup> *“Son of man, behold, they of the house of Israel say, ‘The vision that he sees is for many days from now, and he prophesies of times far off.’* <sup>28</sup> *Therefore say to them, Thus says the Lord God: None of my words will be delayed any longer, but the word that I speak will be performed, declares the Lord God.””*

Isn't it interesting that, even in the New Testament, we read something very similar how Peter talks about that in the last days, men will be saying, “where's this coming that he's been talking about, where's this coming? We keep it coming, Jesus is coming, Jesus is... how long have people been saying Jesus is coming? Where's this coming?”

And he goes on to say that they say things like, “ever since our father's, things have gone on exactly the way they're going on now, and there's no reason to believe that they're going to be any different for our children or their children.” Peter goes on to explain that God is not tardy or late to fulfill His promise. He's

simply giving people more time because He desires that none be lost, but that all would come to repentance. And so what we might perceive as a delay is God's mercy, its mercy, because when the door closes, the door closes.

Chapter 13, *“The word of the Lord came to me: <sup>2</sup> ‘Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel, who are prophesying, and say to those who prophesy from their own hearts: ‘Hear the word of the Lord!’ <sup>3</sup> Thus says the Lord God, Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!’”*”

Now we’re going to learn some interesting things about these prophets but the first thing we learn there in verse 2 is that they're prophesying from their own hearts. In other words, the source of their information, the source of their prophecy is coming from themselves, it's not coming from the Lord. And then He even says in verse 3, “they're following their own spirit when they are speaking,” they've seen nothing from the Lord, they've heard nothing from the Lord.

They simply are saying what they would want to hear God say. And there's this interesting sort of self-deception that can take place within the heart of someone who claims to be able to prophesy or to speak for God and they actually become convinced that what is in their heart is what is in God's heart. Because it makes sense to them and it seems merciful to them, that's what they believe.

You know what's interesting about this? Christians or people who toy with Christianity, again, they do the same thing. The Bible says that “God created man” but you know that people are spending a lot of time creating God. They do, yeah, we love to do that, we love to create God in our image. “If I struggle with something the Bible says, I'm probably just going to pitch it.” There's a lot of people that never even read the Old Testament or study the Old Testament like you're doing tonight, because they're uncomfortable with it, they're uncomfortable with the judgment.

They want to hang out in the New Testament where it's, there's more, it seems like there's more grace and love and God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. We're going to just..., and there's nothing wrong with focusing on those things, but they're uncomfortable with the Old Testament or they're uncomfortable with things that just don't make sense to them.

I get questions all the time asking me about how, people that are just really uncomfortable about reading Old Testament passages where even children were killed.

They'll say, "well, when the Jews went in and wiped out the Canaanites, when they came into the land, it says they were to kill men, women, and children, is that true?" Pastor Paul: "Yeah, it's true."

"Well, I'm uncomfortable with that." Pastor Paul: "Well, I'm uncomfortable with it too." But I'm also smart enough to know that I don't know everything and I don't have all the details. And I am not God and I don't have the justice of God and the understanding of God to be able to judge whether that situation was wrong.

There is a point Christians and do you understand this? There's a point you have to come to as a believer where you're either going to believe what God says about Himself or you're not.

Remember when Abraham heard from the Lord that He was going to basically destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, his nephew was living there, so he begins to kind of intercede for the city.

Abraham: "God, what if you find 50 righteous people there, would you spare it if there were 50, right?" God: "Yeah, I would do that," Abraham: "well, what about 40, what about 30, what about 20, what if there were only 10 righteous people in the city? Would you spare the place for their sake?" God: "Yeah, I would, I would, I'd spare it for their sake."

But Abraham said an interesting thing during that conversation, "will not the judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25) That's a rhetorical question, "will not the judge of all the earth do right?" Think about that statement, what was Abraham saying? "Far be it from you to do something that was wrong." Abraham believed that God could do no wrong.

I wonder sometimes how many Christians are convinced of that same thing. Because when we come to troubling passages and I'll guarantee you, there are troubling passages in the Bible and we're not going to whitewash it, okay? They are troubling, you're either going to interpret those passages in the light of God's character, justice, righteousness, goodness, and so forth, or you're going to be troubled, you see what I'm saying? And there's that point where we just, we have to reconcile ourselves to who is God?

What does He say about Himself? He says, He's perfectly righteous, He's perfectly pure, there is no darkness in Him at all, He is light, right? Isn't that what the Bible says? Do you believe it?

You see, if you do, you can go into the Old Testament and you can read things that would otherwise be troubling and may still be troubling to some respect. And you say, “well, you know what though, I know God, I know what God said about Himself and I believe what He said about Himself, I believe He is righteous and does no wrong.”

I don't believe anybody is ever going to stand at the judgment and say, “God, you didn't give me a chance.” I don't believe that's going to happen, I don't believe anybody's going to say, “I got cheated and I never got a chance, I never got the right chance.” There are so many things we don't understand, but what we do understand is that the Bible says, “God is good” and that is either going to permeate our understanding of His actions or it isn't.

And so you have to ask yourself the question, “what do I do? What do I do when I face a situation that doesn't make sense to me?” These prophets heard Jeremiah probably prophesying in Jerusalem, now they're hearing Ezekiel say the same things that “God is going to destroy the city.” Oh it doesn't make any sense to them, no, that's not even possible. So what are they doing? They prophesy out of what they believe is right and that's what God is saying about them. They are following their own spirit and they've seen nothing.

Look what God goes on to say about these prophets, these false prophets in verse 4, He says, “*4 Your prophets have been like jackals among ruins, O Israel.*” In other words, they're just these scroungers looking for prey who walk around ruins and scour for things they can prey upon, that's what they're like to you.

Verse 5, He says, “*You have not gone up into the breaches, or built up a wall for the house of Israel, that it might stand in battle in the day of the Lord.*” In other words, the false prophets had done nothing to actually help the people to understand their sin, to understand that there was an enemy coming, to understand that they needed to repent, and that by repenting, they would, in essence, be building up the wall if you will, the strength to protect the people. They didn't do any of that.

He says in verse 6, “*They have seen false visions and lying divinations. They say, ‘Declares the Lord,’ when the Lord has not sent them, and yet they* (look at this) *expect him to fulfill their word.*” Here's that self-deception. They are so convinced within themselves because it makes sense to them that they believe God is going to fulfill their word, not His word, their word. “I know that God's going to do what I want. Why? Because I want it and if I want it, that means it's good.” You see?

Have you ever talked to somebody who prayed about something and really wanted it very badly and then it didn't come to pass, and then they became angry and bitter at God? I have, I've met people that have done that. I mean, we've all been disappointed about something in the past, but there's this point where we actually convince ourselves that because I want it, it's what God wants and that is a very dangerous place to be.

Verse 7, *“Have you not seen a false vision (He's talking now to these false prophets) and uttered a lying divination, whenever you have said, ‘Declares the Lord,’ although I have not spoken?”*

*“<sup>8</sup> Therefore thus says the Lord God: “Because you have uttered falsehood and seen lying visions, therefore behold, I am against you, declares the Lord God. <sup>9</sup> My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and who give lying divinations. They shall not be in the council of my people, nor be enrolled in the register of the house of Israel, (that sounds like their whole family line is going to be wiped out) nor shall they enter the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord God.*

*<sup>10</sup> Precisely because they have misled my people, saying, ‘Peace,’ when there is no peace, and because, when the people build a wall, these prophets smear it with whitewash, <sup>11</sup> say to those who smear it with whitewash that it shall fall! There will be a deluge of rain, and you, O great hailstones, will fall, and a stormy wind break out. <sup>12</sup> And when the wall falls, will it not be said to you, ‘Where is the coating with which you smeared it?’””*

These are really interesting statements that Ezekiel or the Lord is making through Ezekiel to the people. But did you notice He says, “the people build a wall, you didn't build a...” Remember earlier in verse 5, He said, “you didn't build a wall for them, you didn't stand in the gap and build a wall to make them safe, they build their own walls,” which is what they want to hear, it's their false hopes, right? He says, “and what do you do, you come along and you whitewash those walls to make them pretty.” Isn't that interesting? The people, in other words, are building false hopes and the false prophets try to make it look better, but it's just a facade.

*“<sup>13</sup> Therefore thus says the Lord God: I will make a stormy wind break out in my wrath, and there shall be a deluge of rain in my anger, and great hailstones in wrath to make a full end. <sup>14</sup> And I will break down the wall that you have smeared with whitewash, and bring it down to the ground, so that its foundation will be laid bare. When it falls, you shall perish in the midst of it, and you shall know that I am the Lord.”* How many times has God said that?

*“<sup>15</sup> Thus will I spend my wrath upon the wall and upon those who have smeared it with whitewash, and I will say to you, The wall is no more, nor those who smeared it, <sup>16</sup> the prophets of Israel who prophesied concerning Jerusalem and saw visions of peace for her, when there was no peace, declares the Lord God.”*

*<sup>17</sup> “And you, son of man, (now He’s talking to Ezekiel) set your face against the daughters of your people, who prophesy (look at this once again) out of their own hearts. (now He’s going to address the prophetess or the women who prophesy) Prophecy against them <sup>18</sup> and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Woe to the women who sew magic bands upon all wrists, and make veils for the heads of persons of every stature, in the hunt for souls! Will you hunt down souls belonging to my people and keep your own souls alive? (in other words, “you think you’re going to last?”)*

*<sup>19</sup> You have profaned me among my people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, (in other words, they were charging people for these magic bracelets or magic bands and magic veils) putting to death souls who should not die and keeping alive souls who should not live, by your lying to my people, who listen to lies.*

*<sup>20</sup> “Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against your magic bands with which you hunt the souls like birds, and I will tear them from your arms, and I will let the souls whom you hunt go free, the souls like birds. <sup>21</sup> Your veils also I will tear off and deliver my people out of your hand, and they shall be no more in your hand as prey, and you shall know that I am the LORD.*

*<sup>22</sup> Because you have disheartened the righteous falsely, although I have not grieved him, and you have encouraged the wicked, that he should not turn from his evil way to save his life, <sup>23</sup> therefore you shall no more see false visions nor practice divination. I will deliver my people out of your hand. And you shall know that I am the LORD.”*” Aren't those incredible verses? The people had even... Because the pagan ways of the people had become so entrenched in the lives of these people, they had these superstitious ideas of magic bands and magic veils that would keep people safe or do, whatever they did, whatever they promised them. And the church has gotten into stuff like this too.

Over the course of the history of the church, we've seen the same sort of ideas enter into the church. Even to the point where I remember one day getting a mailing, I went up to the post office, or rather to our post box there at the end of the street; opened up the mail and there was this, well, they called it a “prayer mat” that had been sent to me by some TV evangelist, but it was an anointed prayer mat. It was especially anointed prayer mat and I was told in that letter

that if I would put that mat on the floor and kneel down on it and pray it, that I would get special answers to my prayers.

Because you see that prayer mat had been anointed by this particular evangelist who obviously had a lot of anointing to give away. And so, there was this long promise of all the things that I would get when I kneel on this prayer mat. And oh, by the way, would I please send in a generous offering? And if I have faith, I will anyway, right? If I have faith, I'll send in a generous offering.

You ever wonder if those guys had so much faith, why they don't send money to you? It doesn't work that way, it's that same almost kind of superstitious sort of a thing. You take passages from the Book of Acts where it talks about the extraordinary workings of the Lord among the people. You remember, it talks about how the Apostle Paul's sweat band, when it was taken and laid on the sick, they would get better. It's written in the Book of Acts, but you know what Luke is very careful to tell us in that passage, he says, "and the Lord did extraordinary miracles."

And see there are some people that want to take the extraordinary and make it into the ordinary. All they got to do is, you just, I can send this thing to you and this will happen. And we start to devolve into the same sort of an idea where if I just do this, then this will happen, and so forth and it gets really crazy if we go that way. We're going to stop there at the end of 13 and we're going to pick it up in Ezekiel chapter 14 next time, so let's pray.

Father, thank you so much for Your Word. Thank you, Lord as we go through this study of Ezekiel, that you continue to reveal areas of our own lives that we need to take a close look at. Father, keep our hearts right, keep our hearts from embracing wrong ideas. Lord, keep us from thinking that just because I want something that it has to be your will.

Lord, we just want to submit to you because we believe you're good. We believe you're holy and pure and righteous, and the judge of all the earth will do right. Thank you for giving us this time tonight, continue to speak to our hearts we pray in the name of Jesus our Savior, amen.